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SUBJECT: SRSG OULD ABDALLAH BRIEFS AMB. RICE ON SOMALIA

REF: USUN 286

Classified By: Amb. Susan Rice, for reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Somalia, told Amb. Rice on March 18 that the Council should adopt a "new paradigm" for Somalia, discussed "disappearances" of ethnic Somali youths from the U.S. and UK, and urged tangible support to Ugandan and Burundian peacekeepers. He urged donations to the TFG, said that long-abandoned official Somali bank accounts could help cover TFG expenses, and pushed for better use of sanctions listings and delistings to reinforce the political process. End summary.

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A new paradigm for the political process, PKO  
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¶2. (C) SRSG Ould-Abdallah paid a courtesy call on Ambassador Rice on March 18, in advance of the Security Council's March 20 session on Somalia, to discuss political and security developments in the country. He said that the cycle of "conference after conference" needs to be broken and advocated a "new paradigm" for Somalia which would place Transitional Federal Institutions at the center of the political process. The process should remain open, but not "all-inclusive, because this gives a veto to every Somali." The SRSG said that President Sharif's administration should maintain open dialogue with those outside the government, but that this dialogue should take place in Mogadishu rather than "in five-star hotels abroad." Continuing a political process abroad would only embolden spoilers, he said, each of which would want their own Djibouti-style agreement. The consequence would be to prolong the conflict and undermine nascent TFG institutions.

¶3. (C/NF) Ould-Abdallah said that he had initially favored a UNPKO in Somalia in order to focus resources and attention on the problems of Somalia, but that he now believed the debate over a Somalia PKO had become counterproductive as DPA and DPKO engaged in what he called a "civil war" over the issue. While he no longer supported blue-hatting the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), the SRSG said he believed that holding out the prospect of a PKO was useful, as French and UK support for AMISOM would evaporate if a more expensive PKO was taken off the table. For this reason, he favored an extension of resolution 1863's support to AMISOM in order to ostensibly prepare for a PKO, even if a PKO was not ultimately authorized.

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TFG money - urgent donations and Swiss bank account rumors  
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¶4. (C) Ould-Abdallah said that the Sharif-Sharmarke administration was less likely to be dependent on support from the international community over the long term if it was seen by Somalis as a success during its first hundred days.

For this reason, a relatively small amount -- \$3-5 million -- of donor money was needed immediately to fund a force of 3000 Somali troops that would help stabilize Mogadishu. The SRSG asked us to "work through some African or Arab country" to help meet this short-term need, as the UN in "typical New York fashion" would be unable to offer timely support. (NOTE: He later proposed to poloff that donations could be routed through the central bank of Djibouti in its capacity as correspondent bank for the Somali central bank and monitored by AMISOM staff on the ground. End note.)

¶15. (C) The SRSG said that one possible solution to the Somali government's money problems could lie in official overseas accounts of the Somali government which had been abandoned since the Siad Barre era. Ould-Abdallah said that he had learned of two accounts in Switzerland and Italy (NFI) which contained tens of millions of dollars each in Somali government funds, but he would not mention the countries involved publicly, as the issue was potentially "explosive." He said that the challenge would be to convince Swiss and Italian authorities that the Sharif-Sharmake government was the legitimate legal authority in Somalia and rightful owner of the funds in question. Another potential source of funds was revenue from civil aviation overflights, according to Ould-Abdallah. He said that accessing this revenue, which was reportedly being collected and managed by the ICAO, could help Sharif fund necessary security forces without relying on foreign donations.

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SRSG on AMISOM support and effectiveness  
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¶16. (C) Ould-Abdallah said that AMISOM was doing important work in Mogadishu and that AMISOM's Burundian and Ugandan peacekeepers needed "concrete" evidence of the international community's support in order to encourage them to stay despite continuing losses. He said that P5 embassies in Kampala and Bujumbura should encourage opposition parties not to politicize their countries' participation in AMISOM. Other tangible ways of showing support would be to help Burundians obtain food from Burundi rather than rely entirely on rations sourced from Uganda, to support Burundi's request for an increase in its soldiers' per diem rate, or to provide Burundian and Ugandan soldiers with better medical facilities. The SRSG commented that Ugandan soldiers were "great" and "tough." He described the Burundian soldiers in AMISOM as a mixed bag: the Tutsi troops from the National Army were professional and focused, while former rebels incorporated into integrated units sometimes lacked discipline.

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Disappearances, Sanctions, Piracy  
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¶17. (C) Ould-Abdallah said that the USG was right to be concerned by developments in Somalia, particularly due to the increasing number of young U.S. citizens of Somali origin who had returned to Somalia to join Islamic insurgent groups. He said that in a recent conversation, the mayor of Baidoa told him that in his town alone there were 15-17 teenage American citizens training with al-Shabaab. In order to improve the fight against such extremists and their backers, the SRSG said the UN should make better use of the sanctions tools at its disposal. If the UN were able to de-list UNSCR 1267 designees who cooperated with the political process, it would encourage good behavior from "bad guys who now feel they have nothing to lose." The Somalia sanctions committee should also make use of its authority to impose targeted sanctions against those working to thwart the peace process, he said, echoing comments by his adviser the day earlier (reftel). On piracy, the SRSG said that he supported the deployment of international forces to the region and felt that their

presence helped maintain the focus of high-level principals on the crisis in Somalia. He also said that he would make brief mention in his March 20 briefing of the importance of the fight against impunity.

Rice